



**American
Red Cross**

Testimony of Jack Harder,
American Red Cross, Mid-Fairfield Chapter
Director, Community Education

**Re: Support of Raised Bill 5503 Act Concerning Automatic External
Defibrillators in Health Clubs.**

Distinguished members of the General Law Committee:

On behalf of the American Red Cross Chapters of Connecticut, I wish to express support for Raised Bill 5503, An Act Concerning Automatic External Defibrillators in Health Clubs.

Simply put, AEDs save lives. They are the most important link in the Cardiac Chain of Survival.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) claims the lives of more than 250,000 people in the United States each year. The American Red Cross supports the position that approximately 50,000 lives each year could be saved through use of AEDs and in training and awareness of the Cardiac Chain of Survival. The Cardiac Chain of Survival includes:

- Early Recognition
- Calling 911
- Early CPR
- Early Defibrillation (within four minutes of SCA) using an AED; and
- The arrival of Early Advanced Life Support

For optimal impact, CPR and defibrillation should be administered within four minutes of cardiac arrest. The average response time for first responders once 911 is called is eight to 10 minutes. For each minute defibrillation is delayed, the chance of survival for a person in cardiac arrest is reduced by approximately 10%. Having an AED on-site can truly mean the difference between life and death for victims of Sudden Cardiac Arrest. **And it is important to note that CPR does not restore a normal heartbeat. Only defibrillation can.** CPR helps circulate blood that contains oxygen to the vital organs until an AED is ready to use or advanced medical care arrives (taken from the ARC Responding to Emergencies text, fourth edition).

Sudden Cardiac Arrest can affect anyone, anywhere, but athletic exercise can increase individuals' risk. It makes sense that AEDs be accessible in health clubs, where many people of varying levels of physical condition exercise.

The defibrillation industry states that AEDs are easy to use and require little specialized instruction. In fact, Red Cross training in CPR and the use of AEDs requires only four-and-a-half hours. The 2005 consensus on science for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care agrees that Sudden Cardiac Arrest can be treated most effectively

by a combination of CPR and Defibrillation. The American Red Cross believes in the effectiveness of that regimen and subscribes to it in our training.

AEDs are proven technology, reflected in the success rates I have already mentioned. AEDs direct rescuers with voice prompts and automatically analyze a victim's heart rhythm. They deliver a shock only if appropriate. In fact, Good Samaritan laws in all 50 states now provide some level of protection for responders who use defibrillators to help save or sustain a life.

Having AEDs and staff trained in the lifesaving skills of CPR and AED on site will significantly improve the chance of survival for health club patrons who suffer sudden cardiac arrest. We urge your support and passage of this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our position today before the Committee.